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ABSTRACT

This document is in semi-outline form and served as the basis of a conference presentation on how the discipline of industrial/organizational psychology addresses issues of fairness and justice. The paper begins with a comparison of personnel and organizational psychology (their application to job analysis, job selection systems, and performance appraisals) and introduces the concept of workplace diversity psychology. Workplace diversity psychology deals with workplaces that are fair and just regardless of race, gender, sexuality, age, or physical ability. Workplace diversity is described in terms of how each of these factors can be experienced by some workers as an entrenched privilege and is invisible to others. Workplace diversity psychologists study the work consequences of justice perceptions for those people for whom privilege is invisible as well as those for whom it is a daily issue. The bibliography lists four references. In addition, there is a list of 18 suggested readings about organizational justice, privilege, human resources and development, and legal issues. (AJ)

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Fairness and Justice from an I/O Perspective

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"Multiple Views of Fairness--What's Hot (and What's Not) in the Divisions"

Rosemary Hays-Thomas, Chair

ED 473 643

Good Afternoon. I am Kecia Thomas, and I'm an Associate Professor of Psychology at the University of Georgia. I am very fortunate to have as a collaborator, student, and friend Ms. Harriet Landau who worked on this presentation with me. As you can see, before she came to UGA, Harriet was a corporate lawyer in her prior life.

I will briefly talk about the ways in which the discipline of Industrial/Organizational Psychology addresses the issues of fairness and justice.

Industrial-Organizational Psychology

- Personnel Psychology
- Organizational Psychology
- Psychology of Workplace Diversity

In thinking about the discipline of I/O psychology, I think it's natural for those in the field to think about the I versus O dichotomy in I/O. Specifically, I or industrial usually reflects personnel psychology. The O represents organizational psychology. I will define each of these

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aspects of industrial/organizational psychology and talk about the ways in which personnel and organizational psychology approaches fairness and justice in the workplace.

I also want to discuss what I'll call the psychology of workplace diversity. Although not a formal recognized sub-field of I/O, those of us who study workplace diversity certainly work toward addressing issues of fairness and justice as well. In fact, diversity researchers bridge the more traditional areas of personnel and organizational psychology in our research in order to facilitate creating fair and just workplaces for all people regardless of race, gender, sexuality, age, and physical ability.

Personnel Psychology
(Cascio, 1998)

- Topics
  - Individual differences in behavior and job performance and methods of measuring those differences
- Examples of Work
  - Job analysis
  - Development of selection systems
  - Performance appraisals

Cascio refers to personnel psychology as the study of individual differences in behavior and job performance and of methods of measuring those differences. Examples of the work in which personnel psychologists are engaged include: job analysis (the study of a job -- identifying the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to successfully do that job); the development of selection systems which may include tests, interviews, work samples; and performance appraisals.

- Personnel Decisions
  - Selection & Other Personnel Decisions
    - Differential validity and prediction
  - Performance Evaluation
    - Rater judgment biases
    - "Similar to me" bias

Personnel psychologists are very concerned with fairness in personnel decisions. One important area of study is how organizations can make selection and other personnel decisions fairly. One area of concern involves the tests or other instruments used for employee selection and promotion. For example, are the tests valid across groups, such as racial groups?

Personnel psychologists working in the area of performance evaluation are also concerned about fairness in how these evaluations are made. Measurement specialists of course, engage in research on avoiding rater errors such as halo, leniency, and central tendency. But there are also "similar to me" biases that may present themselves in any subjective evaluation instrument such as an unstructured interview. Social psychology has taught us that those we perceive as being similar to me, are perceived to be more attractive, more likeable, and more competent. Personnel psychologists then have as a goal, reducing the subjectivity that can be a part of selection and personnel decisions in order to reduce these biases.

- Legal Environment
  - Civil Rights Acts & Title VII
  - Equal Employment Opportunity

- Age Discrimination Act
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Executive Orders 11246 and 11375

As practitioners we also have to be aware of and understand the legal environment in which the organization we work with exist. These acts and statutes provide a legal minimum in regards to justice and fairness. As scientists we also realize that we must be concerned with perceived fairness and justice as well.

Organizational Psychology

- Topics
  - Study of individual and group behavior in organizations (Jex, 2002)
- Examples of Work
  - Organization development and change
    - Training
    - Leadership development
    - Team building

Perceptions of justice and fairness on the part of employees lead us to a discussion of organizational psychology. We who work in organizational psychology are concerned with the study of individual and group behavior in organizations. Increasingly we are taking more macro perspectives on this work and attempting to understand not only individual and group behavior, but also behaviors of organizations within turbulent economic and social environments and the impact of these environments upon workers. Some of the work in which organizational psychologists are engaged include:

Developing and implementing training systems.

Developing and implementing leadership development programs.

Engaging in the evaluation of these systems and programs.

We also facilitate team building and serve as process consultants and facilitators. Likewise we are often responsible for annual employee attitude surveys and feedback systems that can facilitate organizational development.

- Justice Perceptions in the Workplace
  - Distributive justice
  - Procedural justice
  - Interactional justice
- Outcomes
  - Attitudinal
  - Behavioral

As organizational psychologists, perceptions of those in the workplace are important to us because it gives us insight into their reality; a reality that may subsequently influence their attitudes and behaviors. Therefore, perceptions of justice are very important. Let me describe three types of justice perceptions and explain their impact on organizational behavior and organizations:

Distributive justice refers to the fairness of decision outcomes. Is the reward or salary I've received.

Procedural justice refers to the process of how rewards are distributed. That is, are the procedures used to make the decision fair?

Interactional justice is the interpersonal treatment that people receive in respect to organizational decisions. This particular form of justice is under debate; some argue that interactional justice is just a component of procedural justice whereas others see it as a dimension of justice on its own. Some individuals take the concept even further and propose that interactional justice really consists of two distinct dimensions: interpersonal justice and informational justice

There are both attitudinal and behavioral consequences for perceptions of justice in the workplace. The likely more immediate attitudinal consequences are: lowered levels of satisfaction and commitment to the workplace. In addition we are concerned with the behavioral consequences of justice perceptions which include: the decreased likelihood of job performance & OCBs, the increased likelihood of absenteeism and turnover, and perhaps even retaliatory behavior toward individuals and the organization.

Workplace Diversity

- Topic
  - Study of the impact of a diverse workforce on the workplace; organizational barriers to performance and career development for women and ethnic minorities
- Examples of work
  - Recruitment
  - Training

- Audits of organizational cultures and the climate for diversity

Individuals concerned with work place diversity engage in work such as the development and implementation of recruitment programs to increase diversity, and the development and implementation of diversity training programs. More and more we are working on the evaluation of these programs as well.

We are also concerned with audits of organizational cultures and the climate for diversity. That is, we are attempting to understand what values, norms, and customs of organizations create meaning for its workers. Also, what are employee's assessments of the opportunities for and treatment of women and people of color in the organization? Do people of color for example, feel as though there are systems of hidden advantage that Whites benefit from and that they don't.

Workplace Diversity-Privilege

- Definitions of Privilege
  - The systematic conferral of benefits and advantages due to dominant status (Wildman, 1996)
  - An invisible package of unearned assets that one counts on each day and about which we are meant to remain oblivious (McIntosh, 1993)

When talking about hidden systems of advantage in organizations (and outside of them as well), I'm really talking about privilege. Wildman refers to privilege as the systematic conferral of benefits and advantages due to dominant status. McIntosh talks about privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets that one counts on each day and about which we are meant to remain

oblivious. So privilege, in this sense of hidden advantage, has little to do with money or wealth, although there is certainly a class privilege throughout society.

To understand privilege we need to think about what or who within our society has been normalized and who has been defined as the other. The privileges themselves are invisible to those who enjoy them. I realize that privilege is still likely a confusing concept, so let me share some examples of privilege in the workplace that may negatively impact the climate for diversity especially from the perspective of those who are not afforded these privileges. Specifically I want to discuss three types of workplace privilege-privilege due to race, due to gender, and due to sexuality.

Privilege in the Workplace-Race

- If I receive a poor performance evaluation I can be sure that race is not the problem
- I can speak to a powerful group without putting my race on trial
- I have little fear about ignoring the perspectives of people of other races
- I can pursue work in which I'm interested (e.g. diversity) without others questioning my competence

Privilege in the Workplace-Gender

I can go home from most meetings and feel somewhat tied in, rather than isolated, out of place, outnumbered, unheard, etc.

I can have a family and no one will question my ability to continue contributing to my workplace

I can look at the top leadership team of my organization and feel secure that my perspective is represented and valued

I can seek mentoring from senior colleagues without raising suspicions about my intentions

Privilege in the Workplace-Sexuality

- I can bring my partner to work related social functions without being made uncomfortable
- I feel confident that leaders and peers at work will see my relationship with my partner as an asset and evidence of my competence and mental health
- I feel confident that my relationship with my partner will not negatively impact my career

Is privilege more clear now? As a diversity researcher I am interested in how perceptions of justice and fairness in your workplace will reflect the extent to which you are afforded or denied privilege due to race, gender, and sexual orientation. Again, privilege is invisible for those who have it. So what are the consequences on justice perceptions for those people for whom privilege is invisible as well as for those for whom it is a daily issue.

Conclusion

- Issues of Justice and Fairness pervade of all of I/O
- Improving opportunities for fairness and justice in the workplace involves looking within ourselves as well as throughout the organization
- Issues of justice and fairness pervade all areas of industrial and organizational psychology.
- Furthermore, improving opportunities for fairness and justice in the workplace must involve looking within ourselves as well as throughout all subsystems of the organizations.

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